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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: IRAQ; AFGHANISTAN; TURKEY

IRAQ

1. "Pope has zeal, but no answer on Iraq question"  
Columnist Marcus Gee noted in the leading Globe and Mail (3/6) that, "John Paul is dead against war and he is not afraid to say so.... To drive his antiwar message home, John Paul has met many of the leading players in the Iraq debate: British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Iraqi deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz, United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar.... The Pope's surprisingly muscular intervention puts him at odds with the two devoted Christians who are leading the campaign against Iraq - Mr. Bush and Mr. Blair - and sets up a remarkable debate over the morality of the planned war.... Both Mr. Blair and Mr. Bush believe just as strongly as the Pope that their course is the morally correct one. In fact, as opposition to the war has grown, both have begun framing their arguments in moral terms.... If war is the wrong answer, what, in the case of Iraq, is the right one? To this, Christ's Vicar has no good answer."

2. "Ever new lines in the sand"  
Editorial page editor emeritus Haroon Siddiqui commented in the liberal Toronto Star (3/6): "Another week, another American rationale for hurtling toward an invasion of Iraq.... What we are witnessing in Washington is a dangerously ideological administration so bent on waging war that it would say just about anything to justify its holy mission."

3. "The 'evil axis' hits back"  
The liberal Toronto Star editorialized (3/5): "As U.S. President George Bush gets ready to crush Saddam Hussein, the rest of the 'axis of evil' are feeling Saddam's pain. But far from being cowed, North Korea and Iran seem determined to deny Bush the chance to do to them what he's about to do to Saddam. It's getting prickly out there. In Korea, the mercurial Kim Jong-il has countered a threat with a crisis. He has an illegal nuclear bomb or two, and is eyeing an assembly line.... Iran, too, is a worry. Tehran has a murky 'peaceful' nuclear program that's getting murkier. It has rebuffed IAEA requests for better access to nuclear sites.... All the talk in Washington of 'taking out' Saddam's regime before it can arm itself with horror weapons has emboldened Korea, and tempted Iran, to shield themselves from attack by acquiring the very nukes Saddam lacks. Washington's aggressive doctrine of 'pre-emptively' smashing regimes that pose no threat but in theory might risks inviting an arms race that can only damage U.S. interests. Having loosed this stampede, Bush must now try to rein it in. The campaign against terror remains America's chief priority. But getting North Korea to abandon its nukes and persuading Iran not to go down the nuclear road ought to be high on the presidential agenda. Higher than regime change in Iraq. Iraq is a problem. But Korea is a crisis. And Iran is fast becoming one. However Bush may loathe Pyongyang and Tehran, he needs to cool his moralizing, rein in his hawkish advisers and deploy skilled diplomats to engage these regimes in a dialogue to head off catastrophe. Toppling Saddam is a potentially fatal distraction."

4. "Murky message hurts U.S. case for war in Iraq"  
Columnist Marcus Gee observed in the leading Globe and Mail (3/5): "Is the United States trying to disarm Iraq's Saddam Hussein, or trying to remove him from power? The simple answer: both. Washington believes that the only way to make sure he disarms is to oust him. That is why it is preparing to fight. But somewhere on the road to Baghdad, that message has become clouded, confusing U.S. allies and undermining the case for war.... Despite all the confusion in the wider world about regime change, the U.S. administration is quite clear in its own mind about its war aims, which have not changed a jot since the beginning. Disarmament is the goal and ousting Saddam Hussein the method. But by muddying the message, it has hurt its case."

**15. "Intolerable aggression"**

The centrist Winnipeg Free Press editorialized (3/6): "U.S. President George Bush has been expressing high hopes lately about the secondary benefits that may result from a military operation to disarm Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein. These could include freedom, peace and prosperity for the people of Iraq and neighbouring countries, establishment of a democratic Palestinian state and peace for Israel. It is, however, far from certain that these results can be achieved through invasion of Iraq.... Results of that distant kind lie far beyond Mr. Bush's control. America and its allies should be conscious of both the dangers and the opportunities, but they should not decide between war and peace on the basis of hoped or feared results that, for the moment, can only be guessed at. Invasion of Iraq will cause death, injury and destruction of property, mainly for Iraqis but also for the invaders. That is a terrible course to adopt and many governments on the United Nations Security Council have been reluctant to agree to such a course. The other course, however, is far worse. The other course is to tolerate aggression.... Peace and security for all countries depend on effective means for stopping aggression.... The valid purpose for invading Iraq is to disarm Saddam Hussein. That is worth doing for itself and for the larger purpose of showing all would-be aggressors that aggression is not tolerated. If the action leads to general peace and contentment in the Arab world and the Middle East, so much the better, but George Bush should not count on it and he should not be surprised if his action produces unwelcome results that he can neither foresee nor prevent. The best possible result is compliance by Iraq with the requirements of the Security Council. Failing that, invasion to enforce compliance is a cruel necessity. If compliance is not enforced, then the invitation to aggression is issued and the nations of the world must brace themselves for the wars that will follow. "

**16. "The triple veto".**

Editorialist Serge Truffaut wrote in the liberal Le Devoir (3/6): "The last word still belongs to the chief inspectors who will present their report tomorrow. It is worth pointing out that France has insisted that the Blix expose be made in public and not in closed chamber as it was originally planned. Yesterday's gesture by the Berlin-Moscow-Paris axis had an immediate impact. Prime Minister Blair is more isolated than ever... By playing his pieces so unilaterally, the leader of the British government has gone beyond the point of no return. If Washington decides to go ahead without the support of the U.N., as Secretary of State Colin Powell has predicted, Blair will be forced to follow. This man who preferred action over the rule of law has put himself in the position to be hit by the boomerang effect."

**17. "Losing the PR Game"**

Columnist Ian MacDonald wrote in the conservative The Gazette (3/5): "...Once it made a choice of going to the United Nations rather than going it alone on the road to Baghdad, the Bush administration was committed to a diplomatic end game in the Security Council, a game it clearly does not control.... Meantime, world opinion counts. The worldwide anti-war demonstrations on Feb. 15 were also a reminder of the awesome power of the Internet.... Never before has such a well-connected movement demonstrated in such impressive numbers around the world on a single day.... But the worst moment for the Bush administration might have come when Iraqi deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz received an audience from the pope.... Perhaps the best policy for the United States would be to stand by in the Persian Gulf and keep squeezing Saddam until, piece by piece, he destroys all his weapons of mass destruction. Then, in the immortal words of the late Vermont senator, George D. Aiken, in the context of Vietnam, Bush could simply declare victory and pull out."

**AFGHANISTAN**

**18. "What happened to Afghanistan's cash?"**

The conservative National Post opined (3/6): "When Afghanistan's Taliban regime fell in late 2001, there was a widely shared feeling that this was a victory for the Afghan people as much as it was for the United States and its allies.... In recent months, however, the world's attention has become increasingly focused on Iraq, and it appears the West is beginning to forget about Afghanistan.... Washington dropped the ball on Afghanistan a second time, just two weeks ago. In late February, Japan played host to a second conference on Afghanistan, this time to promote the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration...of the estimated 800,000 Afghan men who serve in the country's

network of private armies. The United States pledged just \$14-million for this crucial effort, compared to a promise of \$42-million from Japan. This is unacceptable: The United States is both the world's richest country and the Western nation with the most to lose should Afghanistan collapse or fall back under the sway of Taliban-like extremists. Washington should be rounding up more generous funding for the DDR and other projects. It also must commit larger amounts itself. It would be fantastically short-sighted for the United States to spend tens of billions of dollars fighting a high-tech war in 2001 - only to see the benefits squandered because of a lack of follow-up humanitarian funding in 2003 and beyond.... It should be no small embarrassment to Western governments that Iran - a member of George W. Bush's 'axis of evil' - has actually turned into one of Afghanistan's most generous donors.... If the Western effort falters, and a political vacuum develops in Afghanistan, we can guess what the consequences will be.... In 1989, when the Soviet Union was kicked out of Afghanistan by U.S.-backed mujahadeen, the United States had the chance to help Afghanistan rebuild. Instead, Washington declared victory and abandoned the country - a move that left Afghanistan ripe pickings for the Pakistan-backed Taliban a few years later. We cannot allow history to repeat itself."

#### TURKEY

##### 19. "Ankara's dilemma"

Editorialist Serge Truffaut wrote in the liberal French-language daily *Le Devoir* (3/4): "The Ankara government intends to try again by presenting a second motion to Parliament.... To rally all the members of his party, Erdogan will obviously have to propose a motion with more potential gains than those promised so far by Bush. The dilemma is simple: either the government gives satisfaction to Washington and immediately alienates civil society, or it refuses and its chances of joining the European Union sooner will increase to Bush's great displeasure."

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